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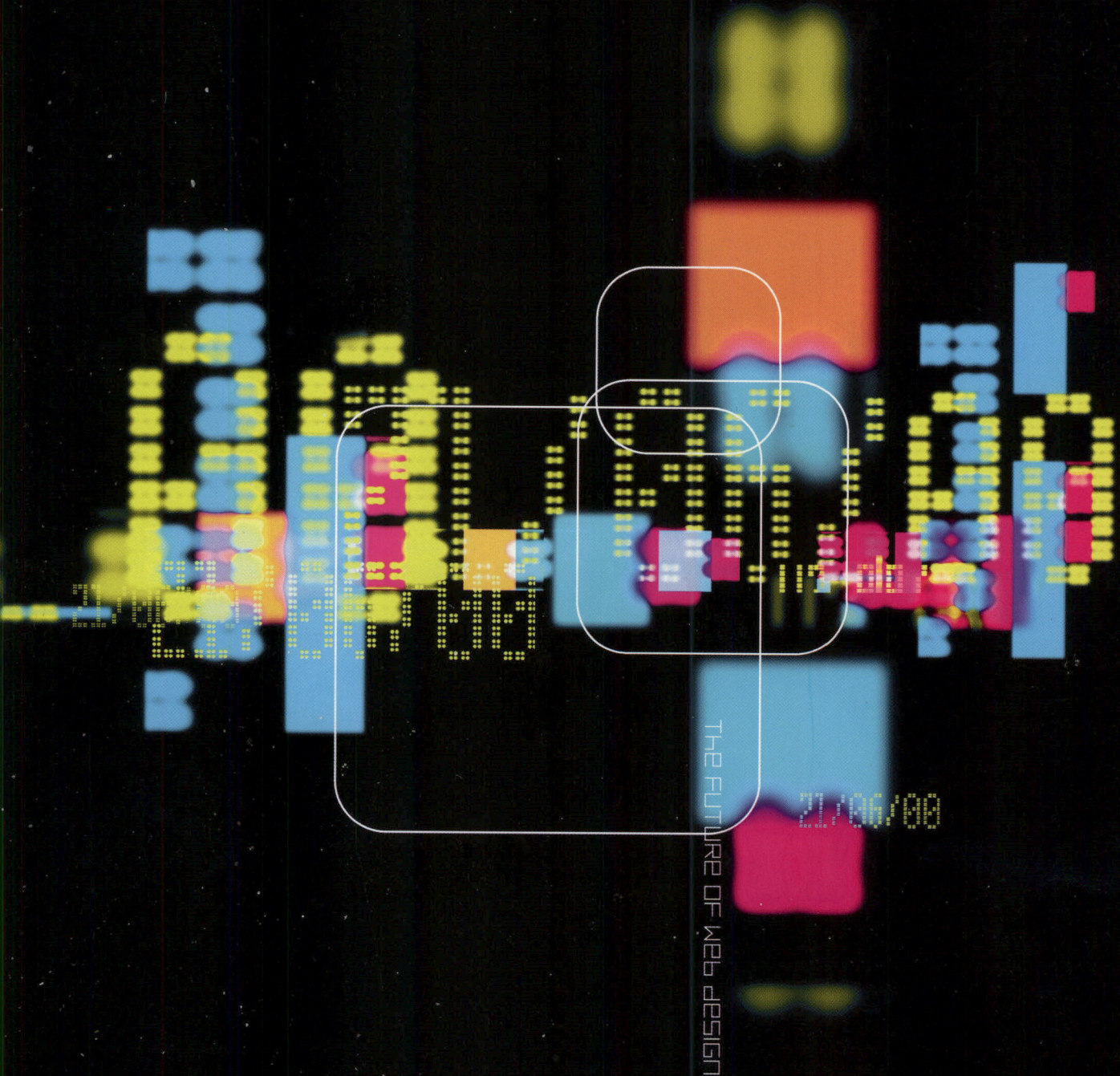
the web designer's bible

issue 000 > special taster edition



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WELCOME TO THIS TASTER issue of **create** magazine. The purpose of these 16 pages is to try and give you a flavour of the magazine we're busily putting together as I write this. Over the last few weeks I've done the rounds of design agencies, shows and press briefings, explaining the purpose of **create** and garnering support. You quickly develop the sales patter, but what really matters is that we exist to put a spotlight on great Websites and the great designers behind them. It's our mission to inspire, innovate and involve. Besides making me fat on free lunches and beer, all these meetings have also helped us hone the mag to ensure it meets the needs of professional site designers. Virtually everyone I've spoken to loves the idea behind **create**, wants a mag which draws attention to great work and can't believe nobody has come out with it sooner.

In terms of actual content, we've got some incredible stuff lined up. Of course, you'd expect a magazine like **create** to keep you informed on all the latest news and to interview all the best players in the business. But **create** does much more than that. It goes to the very heart of site design, rooting out the very best ideas and pushing them forward for discussion and debate.

We all know that in just two years time the Internet will be a very different beast to the one we know now. We all know that to create a great Website you have to stay one step ahead of the pack – all of the time. And if you're a site designer that means finding the best ideas, taking them, running with them and building them into your own sites. Every issue, **create** will serve up the finest work on the Net at the moment. It will inspire you with what can be done, and then it'll look at what you're doing and take your own story back to our readers. We won't preach and tell you what makes good or bad design; instead, we'll offer a forum for Website designers to exchange their thoughts and mull over what works and what doesn't.

But it doesn't end there. Each issue of **create** will have a theme, so that major features and other supporting articles will attempt to address all the various issues surrounding our central theme. For example, in our first issue we're taking a look at the future for the Internet. We're interviewing Nokia's VP about WAP, we're talking to British Telecom about broadband and we're chatting with the head of Open TV about iDTV. Then we're listening to a bunch of designers reveal their predictions for the next five years. And we're following that up with a round-table debate on the future for design agencies. Like you, we want to know what the future holds, so the feature addresses all the issues and talks to all the experts. Just take a look over the page for the full story.

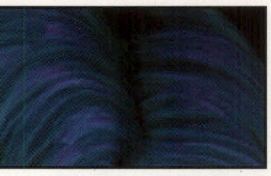
I could eulogise about **create** for hours (and frequently do), because I believe the magazine has the potential to play some small role in taking site design to new giddy heights. These are challenging times and **create** will be there to ensure you make the most of them. I'll get off my soap box now. Just remember to buy your copy on Wednesday 21 June (or turn to page ten for our offer).

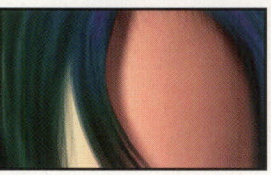
MARK HIGHAM, EDITOR

Take a look at our **create** taster and email your comments to mark.higham@futurenet.co.uk

IMAGE: **SUBSTANCE**

The Web design





Every issue of create is an event. This contents spread, taken from our first issue, gives you a hint of some of the features and articles that will be making it into the magazine. Our first issue explores the theme of the future for the Internet and Web design agencies. See what you'll be getting on Wednesday 21 June...

1 We want to make sure you've got the latest and greatest software which will make your life easier. That's why every issue of create comes with a CD inside the mag packed with utilities, plug-ins and demos of spanking new software.

2 The best ideas on the Net are often the most innovative. That's why we talk to the people behind ground-breaking technologies to discover how they did it and what they're hoping to achieve. Ananova, the world's first digital newscaster, gets the treatment in our first issue.

3 Every issue of create has a theme, and issue one explores the future for Web design. Issue two is our advertising issue, and issue three takes a close look at identity.

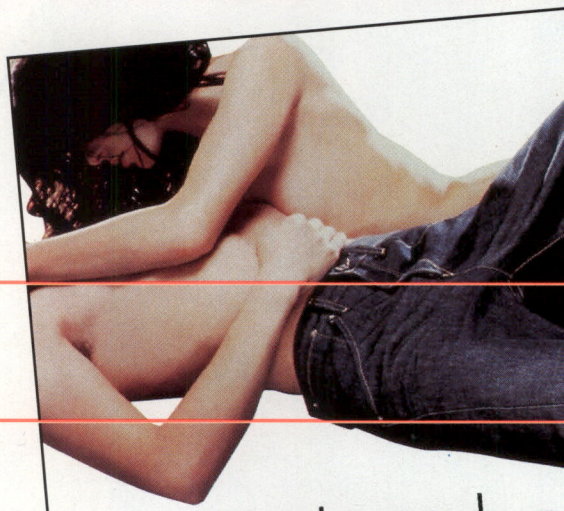
4 We find out what the general public think. Every issue we go along to an Internet café to see what the public are looking at and to get their opinions about the latest sites or technologies hitting the Net.

5 The future is mind-blowing. There are some incredible ideas being dreamed up, and every issue we give experts the chance to talk about what they want to see. For starters, discover how the Digital Animation Group hope to put virtual characters at bus stops.

6 How-to features form an integral part of create. It's our job to reveal the secrets and give you pointers on how you can improve your work. In issue one, we're planning on taking a look at how to design for interactive TV. We talk to the people who do it and explore the pitfalls.

7 In keeping with our central theme, we're running a debate every month where we explore the issues raised. A section of our Website will then invite you to contribute your own opinions to the subject, and we'll print selected feedback in the following issue.

8 Designers are highly prized in this business. Our recruitment section will become the definitive source for jobs in the Web design community. Pages and pages of recruitment ads are supported by helpful features aimed at ensuring you get the job that's right for you.



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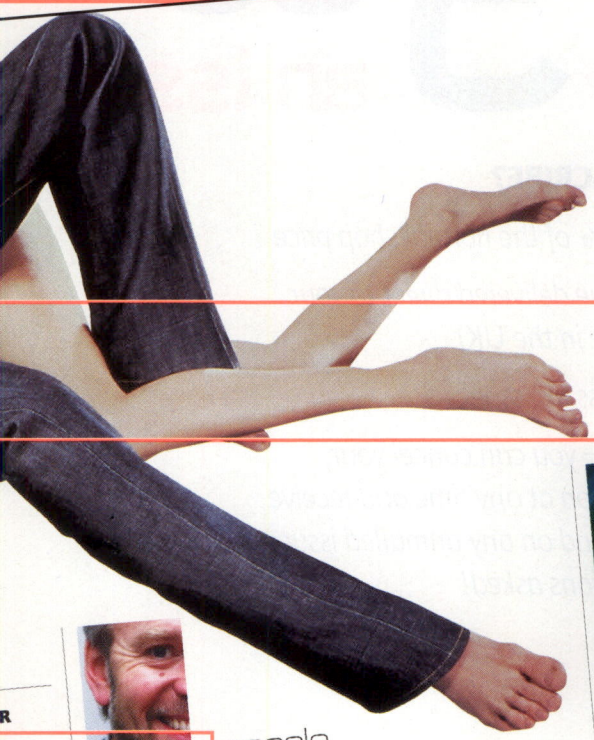

Talent on the Web comes in many forms: read about Levi's site (main image); Nokia VP Bob Brace talks WAP (top); Paul Seymour talks Flash (middle); and Russ Sellers selects his favourite sites.

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ILLUSTRATOR 9
Try out the latest incarnation of this definitive drawing package and stay on the cutting edge

LIVEMOTION
Produce superb animations with Adobe's new Web tool

NOKIA WAP SERVER
Tailor company-specific applications to add value to your WAP operations

PLUS

NETSCAPE 6
Check out *Netscape*'s latest release, where a little goes a long way

NOKIA WAP TOOLKIT
Start here if you're serious about developing and testing WAP sites

EPUBLISHER
Spread your wisdom around the world in a few minutes

IMOVIE EXTRAS
Prepare for next year's Osca with these freaky additions the *iMovie* software

HOTBAR
If your browser's toolbar is tepid, heat it up with *Hotbar*'s graphic skins

PANORAMIC SOFTWARE
Set the full picture and g against backstabbers

ZOOM DEMO
Peer into the depths of your photos to check fo enemy agents

TUCOWS
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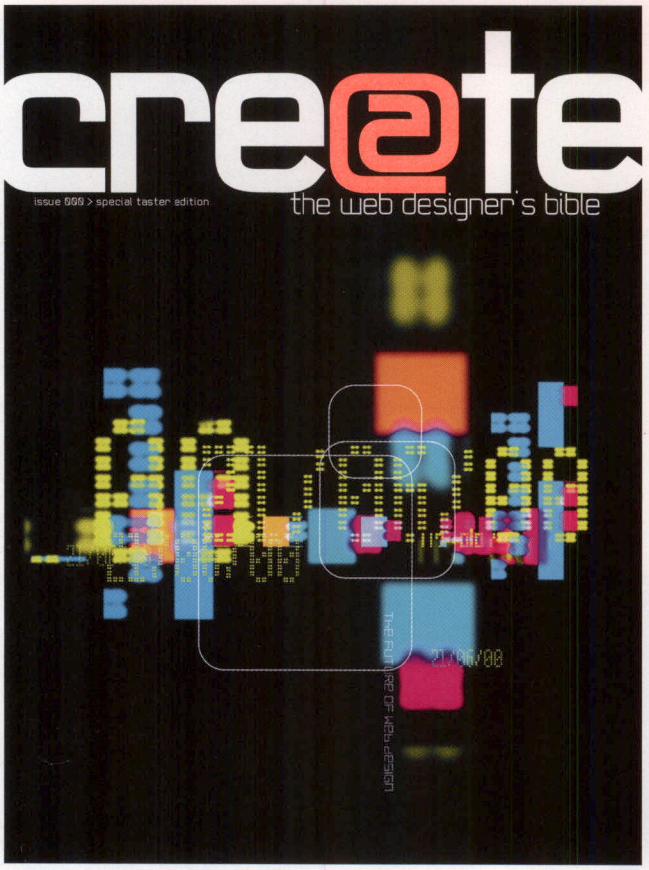

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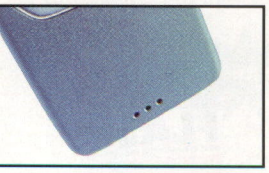
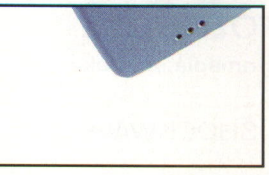
Our mission:

1 TO KEEP YOU IN TOUCH WITH THE NEWS THAT AFFECTS YOU





We recognise that as a site designer, you don't just need to know all the latest news – you need to know exactly what it means to you. That's why when we hear a ground-breaking story, we don't just present the facts: we also go and find out what professional site designers think. But ground-breaking news isn't the end of it. We've got a special section showcasing the latest sites, a regular column from our online lawyer, and a look at some of the maddest clients you've ever worked with.

1 The Web is changing every day, so you need to stay abreast of what's happening. That's why we fill you in on upcoming training courses designed to make your life easier.

2 *Netscape 6* promises greater efficiency and speed, and includes a new browser engine called Gecko. But the news isn't all positive, as Will Richards at Web design agency Bomb points out.

3 Get ideas for stuff you can include in your own Website. Our top ten sites points you off to some of the more innovative sections of the Web.

news_netscape

CAN WEB DESIGNERS TAKE YET ANOTHER INTERNET PLATFORM?

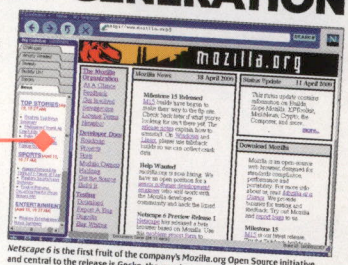
NETSCAPE SHRINKS FOR NEXT GENERATION

Netscape Communications, now a subsidiary of America Online, has announced a pre-release of its latest browser, *Netscape 6*. The move is the first result of the company's Mozilla.org Open Source initiative, which Netscape launched in March 1998 in reply to Microsoft's promise to distribute *Internet Explorer* free of charge.

Speaking at this year's Internet World show in Los Angeles, AOL CEO Steve Case unveiled the new browser to much audience applause. He also revealed that AOL has forged a deal with computer manufacturer Gateway which sees the introduction of a range of Internet appliances running Linux as an OS, plus a new variation of the *Netscape* browser called Instant AOL.

He promised: "*Netscape 6* will give consumers greater efficiency, as well as greater speed and efficiency when they go offline."

Central to the *Netscape* release is a new browser engine called Gecko, which sees the scrapping of *Netscape 4.x* code. Gecko reduces the amount of memory necessary to run your browser, and is compliant with W3C specifications which include CSS1, DOM at levels 0 and 1, as well as JavaScript 1.5. As well as this, *Netscape 6* also fully supports XML.



Netscape 6 is the first fruit of the company's Mozilla.org Open Source initiative, and central to the release is Gecko, the new browser engine.

However, Web designers sounded what could only be described as exasperatedly optimistic at the news: the browser represents yet another technology to optimise Web content.

"We're already coding for four generations of browser, let alone six," comments Will Richards, art director at Web design agency Bomb." But he adds: "It's a new browser that's pushing new technology, thus enabling a more interactive and expansive experience."

Tony Orsi, commercial director at design agency Netro 42 is also interested in the new release.

"I've just downloaded *IE5* and I'm impressed with it. It's quite fast and it's fairly stable." But Tony was interested to examine "a browser that has got rid of most of the bloatware and gets back to some of the basics".

Netscape promises that its new browser will be available before the end of the year – but if you can't wait that long to try it, then you can download a pre-release version at www.netscape.com

"NETSCAPE 6 WILL GIVE CONSUMERS GREATER EFFICIENCY, AS WELL AS GREATER SPEED WHEN THEY GO OFFLINE" **STEVE CASE**, AOL CEO

TOP TEN SITES

THIS MONTH, OUR FAVOURITE ONLINE DESTINATIONS ARE...

- www.yugop.com
- www.sylloge.com/5k/43/index.html
- www.TVgohome.com
- www.soda.co.uk
- www.urbanexpress.co.uk
- www.popex.com
- www.slashdot.org
- www.suck.com
- www.viewaskew.com
- www.sissyfight.com

LUMLEY HITS WEB AU NATUREL

ANIMATION company Bermuda Shorts is bringing Bolt to your browsers with its latest creation — a virtual Joanna Lumley. The *Ab Fab* star appears as a character on the natural health and beauty site Clickmango.com

Despite her status, Lumley had few demands for her alter-ego. "When we first sent her a rough illustration, she asked if we could change her shoes as she wanted kitten heels," says Bermuda Shorts producer Emma Cooke. She was suitably impressed by the alterations to give her character the go-ahead.

Lumley and other caricatures on the site were created with *Illustrator* by Danny Capozzi, who used video references and photos to convert them to their browser-based incarnations, as well as reports of their personnas.

As well as cool graphics, Clickmango.com also boosts sound construction. Fulham-based e-commerce solutions provider netdecisions worked closely with Clickmango on the site's design, and the firm's account manager Ramesh Kumar outlines what it was striving for.

"We were concerned about getting the structure right," he says. "The site needed a refreshing look and feel, but good navigation was the key."

MICROSOFT GOES WIRELESS

Microsoft, AT&T and BT are to collaborate on developments for wireless communications. Microsoft is set to provide the platform for both telecomms companies to make advances with technology, which includes GPRS and UMTS in Europe, plus EDGE and CDPD in the US. It will see a range of products including e-books, calendar services, music and email brought to wireless appliances.
www.microsoft.com

NEW SECURITY COURSE FROM ISS

A new range of courses offered by Internet Security Systems (ISS) aims to make it easy for businesses to train staff about security issues. SecureU aims to educate on topics such as security management, threat management, intrusion detection and vulnerability management. Courses cost £705, but discounts for large groups are available.
www.iss.net

ONLINE E-DUCATION

The University of Glamorgan has plans to host a new online distance learning initiative in conjunction with major players Virgin, Hewlett Packard and Young Enterprise Wales.

Training is set to be exclusively Internet-based and will concentrate on practical business knowledge rather than theory-based learning. The project, to be launched in late spring, is aimed at 16-25 year olds who would not ordinarily have the opportunity to pursue further education. Courses kick off in October.
www.glam.ac.uk

MOBILE REVOLUTION

Amid alarms raised over security and safety, mobile phone manufacturer Ericsson has entered an agreement with Nokia and Motorola to work towards growth of the mobile phone-based Internet. According to Ericsson's figures, 600 million people will access the Internet via mobile phones by 2004, but there are few guarantees of safety on the devices at the moment. The three plan to work together to achieve open standards.
www.ericsson.co.uk

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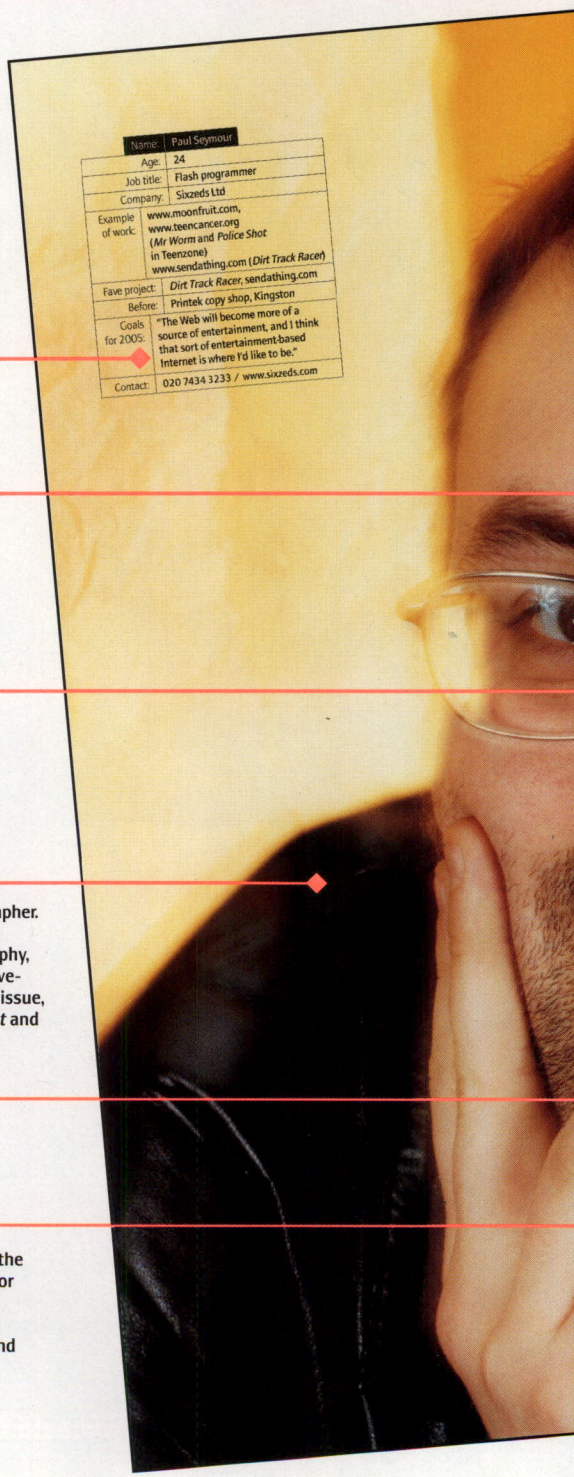
Our mission: 2 TO SPOTLIGHT THE BEST SITES AND THE BEST DESIGNERS

One of create's main aims is to put the spotlight on the best Websites and the best designers. This spread is taken from our Talent section, where every month we talk to the people who've created the very finest sites on the Net. But our coverage of people and great sites isn't just restricted to the Talent section. Thanks to regular sections like 'Hit, miss or maybe', 'What this site needs...' and 'How they did it', the opinions of experts are sought and showcased throughout the entire magazine.


Name: Paul Seymour
Age: 24
Job title: Flash programmer
Company: Sixzeds Ltd
Example of work: www.moonfruit.com, www.teencancer.org (*Mr Worm* and *Police Shot* in Teenzone) www.sendathing.com (*Dirt Track Racer*)
Fave project: *Dirt Track Racer*, sendathing.com
Before: Printek copy shop, Kingston
Goals for 2005: "The Web will become more of a source of entertainment, and I think that sort of entertainment-based Internet is where I'd like to be."
Contact: 020 7434 3233 / www.sixzeds.com

1 Get a glimpse into what designers want for the future. Everyone we talk to is invited to contribute their dreams for the next five years, giving you a clear view of what to aim for.

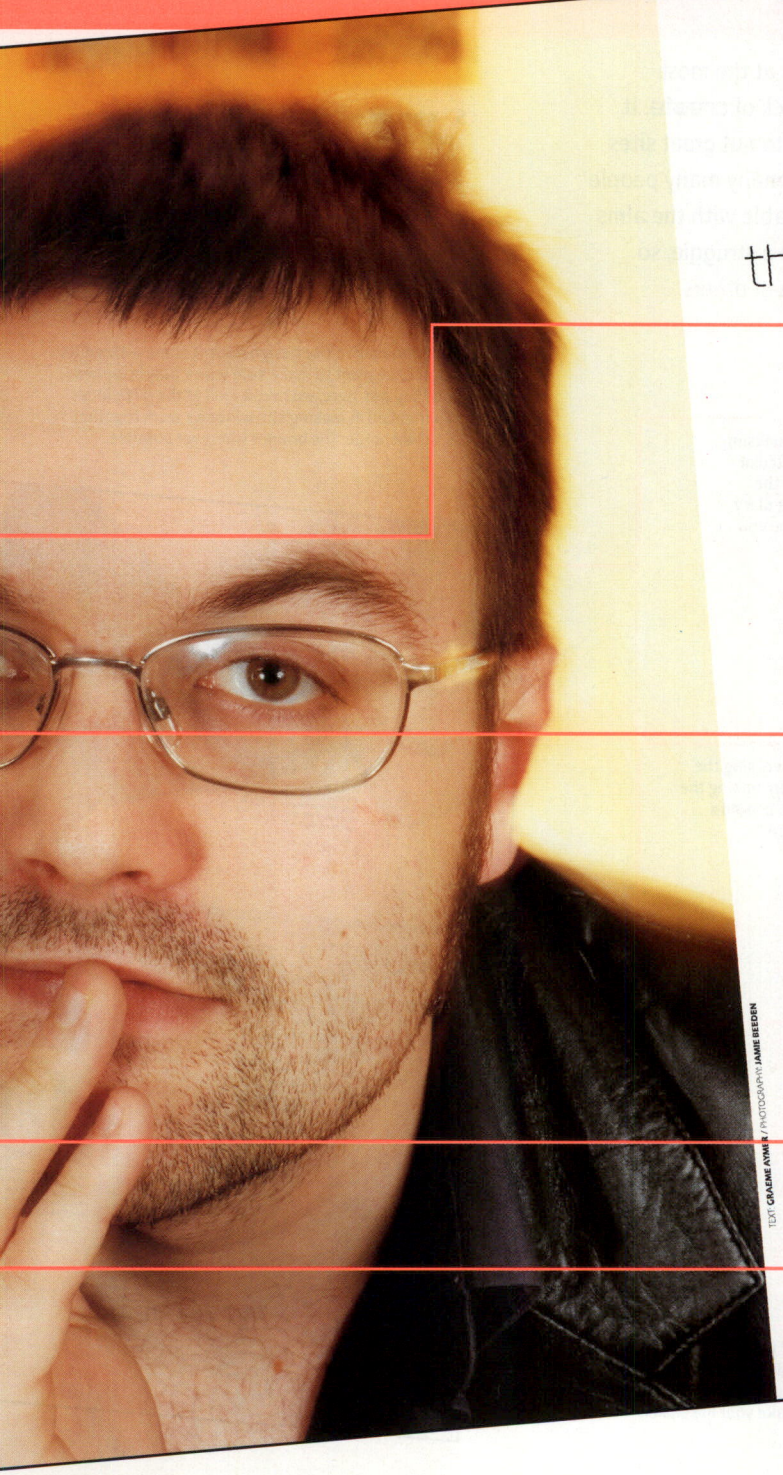
2 *Flash* has vast potential that's only just beginning to be explored. We want to show what other designers are doing with it and give you clues on how you can take it further. Thanks to walkthrough guides elsewhere in the issue showing some of the trickier stuff, you can guarantee you'll be pointing in the right direction.

3 People can come to Web design from all sorts of disciplines. It's this variety of skillsets which leads to all sorts of interpretations of how the Net can be used. It's create's job to pull these ideas together and give them the coverage they deserve, inspiring you at the same time. We're not just interested in talking to the big design studios, because sometimes the best ideas can come from an untrained one-person operation.

4 Each issue, create employs the talents of a guest photographer. High production values are a key part of create's approach, delivering what the Internet cannot. Besides great photography, the magazine is printed on high quality paper stock with a five-colour printing process and special cover effects. In our first issue, Jamie Beeden – who's worked for *Dazed and Confused*, *Select* and *The Sunday Times* – is responsible for shooting the imagery.

5 Paul's love of his site directory, which comes with a *Flash* front-end, demonstrates how you can liven up a database backend. We want to give you plenty of suggestions for things you can introduce to your own sites, and we know from experience what a difference they can make.

6 No-one is fully realising the true potential of the Net, which is why we're always on the lookout for innovative ideas – such as Paul's design wizard, which takes you through the process of building your own site. The Net is evolving every week, and if you want to develop cutting edge sites, then you need to know what to aim for.



the talented mr seymour

PAUL SEYMOUR HAS BROUGHT A FEW *FLASH* TRICKS TO THE MOONFRUIT WEBSITE BY SIXZEDS LTD

Picture this: you're working in a copy shop, doing, well... photocopying, day in, day out. Then your boss comes along and says "I've got big plans for you." What do you do?

If you're like Paul Seymour, designer and *Flash* developer at London's Sixzeds digital design agency, you get the hell out. But to be truly like Paul Seymour, you'd also need to spend four years learning graphic design (a BTec from Guildford College, 1994 to 1996, an HND from City College, Manchester, 1996 to 1998), plus a year and a half learning *Flash* at Web design agency Sixzeds Ltd – where he's currently working on Moonfruit.com

Paul happened upon graphic design following a suggestion from a family friend. His A Level results weren't likely to get him a place at university, so he took the plunge, enrolling in the aforementioned courses. After this, he found himself working in the copy shop; and after his boss's previously documented declaration, he knew it was time to leave. Luckily, opportunity knocked in the form of Sixzeds boss Joe White.

The two had been friends in secondary school, but had lost touch during the years of tertiary education. However, a pub reunion got the ball rolling, and Seymour spotted his chance and took it with both hands. He made an appointment to show his portfolio to both White and Tony Short, Sixzeds' creative director, and was hired in September 1998.

Since then, he's worked on Websites for Kalchas (www.kalchas.com, a case study in the careers section), as well as the Egg intranet and the Teenage Cancer Trust (www.teencancer.org, where he devised worm and shooting games in the teenzone).

Most recently, though, Paul has worked on Moonfruit's high profile Website, which invites you to design your own Web space but with funkier interfaces than is regular fare for places like Geocities and Xoom.

Moonfruit was always going to be a challenge for the agency, as Paul recounts: "When Tony, Wendy (Tan, Moonfruit CEO) and Joe were coming up with the concept, it was like 'Oh you can't do that, that's ridiculous'. But then Tony had his vision and we just had to go for it."

And went for it they did. Paul's work on the Moonfruit site was largely centred on making the *Flash* components work. Visuals were completed by Kevin Foster and Amy Robins, while Paul and Tony had the task of making the whole thing work. The project was started in late summer 1999 and completed in January this year.

Dear to Paul's heart is the design wizard – Moonfruit control – which takes you through the process of building your own site; and a logo builder which he worked on with Tony Short, that's yet to be incorporated.

Paul adds that the trickiest part was the site directory, which Tony assigned to him. The directory is a database, and the interface has to accommodate users adding, deleting and searching for information via a funky, user-friendly *Flash*-style interface. "It was like building a file structure; it was hard work," he recounts.

And what do the bosses think of the talented Mr Seymour? Well Tony thought enough to allow him to design the database directory on his own. And as for Joe White? Paul comments: "I know how he describes me when he's drunk – he's always gushingly complimentary. But I don't think he wants to massage my ego too much."

One of Paul's favourite parts of Moonfruit.com is the design wizard, Moonfruit control, which is your guide to building your site.

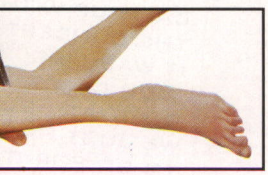
Part of Paul's job was to implement a *Flash* driven database that enables you to get y site up and running quickly and hassle-fre

"WHEN WE CAME UP WITH THE CONCEPT IT WAS LIKE 'YOU CAN'T DO THAT', BU WE JUST HAD TO GO FOR IT

TEXT: GRAEME KYNAN / PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMIE BEEDEN

Our mission:

3 TO SHOW YOU HOW THE BEST SITES ARE DONE



How to guides and behind-the-scenes looks at the most innovative sites on the Web form the bedrock of create. It can cost hundreds of thousands of pounds to put great sites together, and they can involve the input of many many people along the way. Matching up what is achievable with the aims and ambitions of your client's brand can be a struggle, so there's plenty to learn from the experiences of others.

1 Levi's Twisted site represents a totally new way of visualising a site. It's also a pain in the arse to use. But for this particular brand, it was important to be different – which was why the designers were given total freedom to innovate. Taking a diary form, we find out how the project came together and give you a real sense of the trials and tribulations involved.

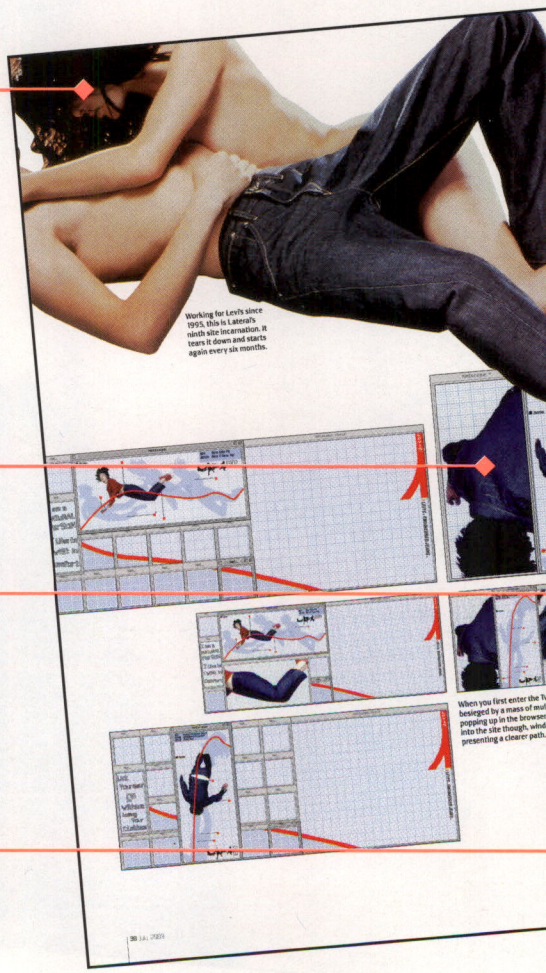
2 Continuing the theme of showcasing the finest ideas, we'll concentrate on making the best sites look the best they can. create's quality paper stock helps out here.

3 The Americans might be using the Web more extensively than anywhere else, but the British are coming up with the most original ideas. Our concentration on British Website design means that you can see what's driving your peers.

4 Need to find a photographer? Lateral couldn't help but recommend Martin Holtkamp, which was why we couldn't resist passing on his details. Wherever possible, create will give you the sorts of tips that make your life easier.

5 What the end user thinks of your site is nowhere near as important as what the client thinks of it. Which is why we talk to clients as well as site designers to ensure you've got the full picture.

6 Of course, innovative site design doesn't come without its problems, and we want to make sure you're fully informed about what they are. Here, we take a look at the difficulties Lateral experienced in making site windows work together. Expect us to look under the bonnet wherever possible.



TROUBLESHOOTING

SALLY BROOKS, LEVI'S PROJECT MANAGER AT LATERAL, TALKS US THROUGH SOME PROBLEM SOLVING

THE PROBLEM

"One of the biggest challenges technically was to make JavaScript — which originated from Netscape's original scripting language — work between spawned windows, regardless of hierarchy. This posed a significant problem, since windows spawned by JavaScript code are 'transparent' to each other, and only accessible from their respective parent or immediate child."

THE ANSWER

"The way to overcome this was to spawn all the sub-windows from one single browser window, the 'father'. JavaScript function calls then had to move through the parent window, via a function call that evaluates the function in the father document, then executes the code locally — rather than in the calling document. Hence the window hierarchy is flattened. This could have been a major problem, as the site had to work across all platforms."

THE CLIENT

THE SITE'S DONE. IT'S GONE LIVE. BUT IS THE CLIENT HAPPY, OR MERELY PUTTING ON A BRAVE FACE?

Lateral's contact with Levi's is Anne Bowen, the multinational's direct-to-consumer marketing manager for Europe. Unsurprisingly, she's pleased with the site: "Talking about the micro site, I wish that everyone could have really speedy computers to be able to enjoy the site at its best, because it's incredible when you have a fast machine."

Anne adds that the production process worked, but continues: "Creation is a messy process, and everyone has to remember that all the time — especially when you're giving out a brief like we did for the micro site. We asked Lateral to do something totally different, something twisted. We wanted to treat the convention of a Website in the same way that we treated convention with the rest of our campaign."

Indeed, with such a brief, she readily admits that it does involve a leap of faith: "We have a long lasting relationship with Lateral, so that helps. There were the usual ups and downs during the process, but there were those magic moments, like the last four days of production when everything was coming together and working. The result's there and we achieved what we set out to do."

Perhaps the real proof of Levi's seal of approval is the fact that discussions are already underway with Lateral about the next incarnation of the ...

December 15th "When it came to generating ideas, we brainstormed. We'd done something similar with the opening windows on the Geri Halliwell site — that was like our first attempt. One of the things in the brief was to 'think out of the box', so we thought we'd do loads of boxes and take the brief to its logical extreme. The original idea behind the site was to do a homepage that worked backwards so it starts incredibly complex and gets simpler the further into it you get. I think we got about 80 per cent of the way there. What we really wanted to do was to end up with one window once you'd gone down about three levels."

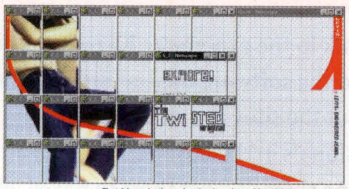
January 7th 2000 "We got green-lighted by Levi's after doing a presentation where we explained the concept and showed them a couple of screens illustrating the idea. Our direct client (Anne Bowen — see 'The Client' boxout) knows a fair bit about the Web but her bosses might not – so you need to have something visual to show them.

"After the presentation, we got feedback like: 'We like this, we don't like that, you've forgotten to put this in" and so on. This all happened quickly because we had so little time. Most of the comments coming back were aesthetic stuff to make sure it tied in with the print ads – tweaking blues and making sure the product was shown correctly. There were some issues about the navigation. We know it's not an easy site to navigate!"

TWISTED MICRO SITE PRODUCTION

February 21st "The windows on the Geri site were dead simple compared to the Twisted site: the main thing was getting the windows to talk to each other. Things that appear simple, weren't. For instance, when you close one window all the others would close down automatically. Just getting that to always work was tough. We also had to deal with the fact that punters might start moving or resizing the windows – resulting in everything fucking up! So we had to make sure the windows snapped back to where they're supposed to be. That works about 80 per cent of the time..."

February 24th "Other technical issues included making the site cross-browser compatible. Although we did ...



The tricky navigation makes the site unique, although it does split opinion. Jon admits: "We know it's not the easiest site to navigate!"

3rd March "The first prototype which the client had to present to a bunch of other folk at Levi's crashed her machine. It was the first prototype that hadn't really been tested and we knew it was flaky – that was a bit of a scare. She wasn't very happy but we did warn her. We only had 24 hours to make it work on her machine so she could show people. Ultimately, most of the problems were small, but when you're under that amount of pressure and you're really doing far too much at the same time, every problem is a big problem."

TWISTED MICRO SITE LAUNCH

6th-8th March 2000 "Towards the end of the production cycle, it was absolute chaos. People were shouting at each other. People were doing 24-hour shifts. It was absolutely insane. The main problem was that we still didn't have a lot of the content for the site because we didn't get the ads until three days before the launch..."

9th March 2000 "The biggest triumph was the day it was launched. It was quite amusing – you're burnt out by the end of the project and you never want to see the site again. We'd been working for three months solid on this stuff, and what you always forget is that you're working for the launch of an ad campaign. So just when we're finished and we're thinking: 'Thank fuck, we can forget about it for a minute', all of a sudden the ads are all over the place! You switch on the telly and there are bloody Levi's ads everywhere. It's like: 'No, go away! Arggggghhhh!'"

10th March onwards "The feedback we've had from the public about the site is about 50:50 love it/hate it, which is what we expected. Public negative feedback has been about the navigation fundamentally – the fact that it's not immediately obvious that you have to click on the windows to navigate to the next section. Once you're into the toy section, for example, you then need to roll over all of the remaining empty windows until you know which one you need to click on to move to the next section."

In hindsight So what would Lateral do differently if it had to do the same thing all over again?

"One of the problems we had presenting such a complex site to Levi's was pretty much our fault. As we got further into the build, it became increasingly difficult to show the client what we were doing because you had to drill down so far into the site and the navigation was so bizarre – it was like: 'How is this going to end up looking?' You don't really know because the windows are always changing – it's not like a fixed design.

"In hindsight, I think we would present ideas more clearly to the client earlier on. What we should have done is create screens for each section first, and then got them approved before we cut them into windows. But that's part of the learning process.

"We're about to go through the whole process again with another project. We want to get things signed off before building anything to avoid going backwards and forwards and slowing things up."

IMAGE CONSCIOUS

IT'S A THORNY ISSUE — HOW DO YOU PRESENT CLOTHES SUCCESSFULLY ONLINE?

Lateral has been looking into the issue of clothes presentation on the Net for years now.

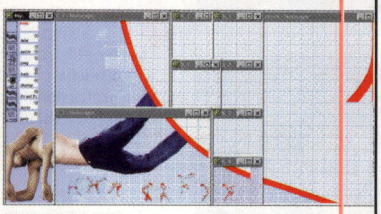
"With the Twisted site, it's trying to get the colours right and trying to show the difference between one shade of blue from another when it's 72dpi – it's always a problem," says Jon. "It's about trying to get good enough detail on the clothing."

Jon thinks that the company has done quite well with the micro site. "When you go to the products, it zooms in and you can see all of it," adds Jon. "It comes down to the photography, so you have to have good photographers. It's all about trying to capture the essence of the clothes."

Lateral uses Martin Holtkamp, a German-born photographer whose work has graced the pages of *iD* and campaigns for big timers like Nike. He shot the photos for the production section of the Twisted micro site, which involved getting the models to leap up and down on a trampoline to capture them in movement.

So is shooting for the Web a different discipline from the norm? "You work closely with the people doing the Web design and listen to what they're saying and their immediate requirements," comments Martin. "At Lateral, they tell me what they can do on the Web. There are some minor restrictions on design things, things that I shouldn't do. For instance, they wanted the models to be free-standing, so I couldn't crop or cut off their heads. But you have perimeters before you start and you work within them."

"You have perimeters before you start and you work within them" – product photographer Martin Holtkamp t. 0958 299 085.



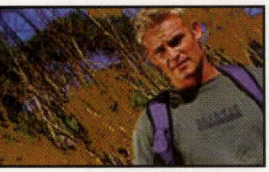
Project Manager for Levi's at Lateral, Sally Brooks comments: "We especially like the product section as it captures the true essence of the products by using Shockwave movies, plus the close-up detail shots do a great job of showcasing the products' more intricate details."

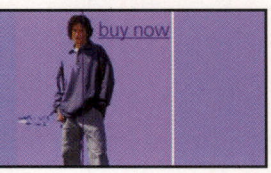
agency brief_levi's site
made to measure
THE BIRTH OF A NEW WEBSITE: TIME FOR BRAINSTORMING, PITCHING AND DEADLINE NIGHTMARES. IN THE FIRST OF A REGULAR SERIES, WE TALK TO THE CREATORS OF A RECENT SITE: THIS MONTH, LATERAL ON LEVI'S
Robbie Williams, Geri Halliwell, The Blair Witch Project UK. Just three of the many sites that have been created by the team at Lateral. The company's roots began in Obsolete, a Web design firm set up in 1995 by Jon Bains. Come 1997, he and four colleagues shut the company, and from its ashes Lateral was born. Today, it employs 25 people and remains independent.
One of the major names on the company's CV is Levi's. Lateral has been working on the clothes manufacturer's sites for the last five years, and recently unveiled its latest redesign for Levi's Europe, where it's created two very distinct sections. First, there's the Straight site (www.eu.levi.com update) which details the product range; and second, the Twisted micro site, which showcases highly ambitious Web design featuring the Levi's Engineered Jeans range. Lateral's chairman Jon Bains tells us about the challenges of creating a homepage for one of the world's largest clothing brands...
THE BRIEF
Early 1999 "Believe it or not, we started talking about the whole site over a year ago. In fact, we're already discussing next April's site. We do things quite far ahead."
December 14th 1999 "With this project, there were two briefs. For the www.eu.levi.com update, the brief was to support retail and let consumers find out what was going on in the Levi's world. It covered everything that Levi's makes, apart from the Levi's Engineered Jeans. These were to be supported by the Twisted micro site which had a different brief – Levi's wanted something mindblowing. It wanted to see how far we could push it, which was quite a nice brief...
"Being told to go for it can be tough in itself because we didn't have a good way of expressing what we were going to do. Sometimes, with a site like this, it can get a bit organic in the build, so keeping the client happy when we're not 100 per cent certain of how it's going to look can be a challenge. The other challenge was the time constraints – the micro site was built in seven weeks! And for something so technically complicated, we didn't have that much time to test it either."
Name: Levi's European site (spring 2000)
Site: www.eu.levi.com
Agency: Lateral (www.lateral.net)
Size of overall team: 5ish
Production Lengths: www.eu.levi.com update – six weeks; Twisted section of the site (Levi's Engineered Jeans Web pages) – seven weeks
No of man hours: "Hundreds of hours"
Overall cost: N/A

7 The site might be finished and up and running, but every project teaches us some lessons. Here, we give Lateral the chance to talk about what it would do differently if it had the chance to do it all again.

Our mission:

4 TO FILL YOU IN ON USEFUL SITES AND THE BEST SOFTWARE





Every month we talk to the experts to discover the sites they're visiting and the software they're using. Rather than preach to you about the sites you should be looking at, we're letting the professionals in the business give you an insight into what's inspiring them. We get them to reveal where they're going so that you can stay abreast of the best. Plus, on the software front, besides reviewing the newest software, we're also giving key products to professional site designers to see how they get on with them.

1 Russ Sellers gives Amazon a glowing recommendation, but we still thought it looked it a bit dated. Which was why elsewhere is our first issue we invited a bunch of Web professionals to suggest how Amazon could be radically overhauled.

2 To give you some background about the person who has selected their favourite sites, we take a quick look at the projects he or she has worked on and how they came to be involved in the Net.

3 As you'd expect with an issue devoted to the future for Web design, WAP is everywhere in our inaugural issue. Russ's recommendation for iobox.com follows an interview with Nokia VP Bob Brace about the future for WAP – we always talk to the people with the best information.

4 So what makes Russ such an expert? Well, we think the fact that he picked up a Milia D'Or award in Cannes for his work on the Ted Baker site just about qualifies him.

5 Russ reveals the sites he's most proud of. With three other designers profiled in our first issue, you can get a quick fix of the Net's 20 finest sites this month.

6 Of course, great sites aren't the only things you need to know about. You also need to know the best resource sites where you can find the software and utilities that make your life easier. Thanks to create's CD-ROM, some of this stuff is given away with the magazine so you don't have to go hunting for it yourself.

Name:	Russ Sellers
Age:	38
Job title:	Chief executive
Company:	Blueberry Net (www.blueberry.net)
Example of work:	Ted Baker Online (www.tedbaker.co.uk)
Fave project:	www.wordcross.net
Other sites:	www.fatface.co.uk www.lauraashley.com
Goals for 2005:	"Our aim is to solely produce our own sites and projects – no clients. The Internet will be at the core, and we want to expand significantly too."

Twelve years on from its birth, Blueberry has evolved from a traditional graphic design house into an envied Web design force. The fruits of Blueberry's labours are scattered liberally across the Web, and the creative forces at the helm are Russ and Ben Sellers, along with partner William Cawley.

The company's Web work began with the launch of the Blueberry Hill Website in 1995, the strength of which helped it to land major contracts from the likes of Cable & Wireless and The Design Council.

The firm has now shifted the focus from building Websites to focusing on e-commerce — and one of the sites Russ is most proud of is Fatface.

"It was the first site where we struck a risk-reward deal," explains Russ. "We charged a rate that was reduced from the total bill, but took a share of every online sale. It's rare, and it set a standard."

This standard has recently been used on Blueberry's Ted Baker Online site, a project that won this year's Milia D'Or in Cannes.

"We wanted to develop a site that could be viewed on a cut-down machine or on a *Flash* or *Shockwave*-enabled computer," explains Russ. "Buying clothes online is a no-no with punters because they can't touch the clothing. With Ted Baker Online, we get them close to the clothes — you can spin round models and zoom right into very close detail on the photography. We added life to the site through animation."

With new business such as Laura Ashley and the Millennium Mapping Company under Blueberry's belts, we thought it high time that Russ showered plaudits on those sites that haven't been created by himself and Blueberry...

Ted Baker Online and Fatface – two of Blueberry Net's 'risk-reward' sites which boast simple but stunning design.

WEB TECHNOLOGY

www.iobox.com & www.box

Heralded by many as the next step i Application Protocol) has already s different generation of Website," he mobile phone, you've got to build a one – it's a different set of code an graphics – it's like going back to th

Russ has already indulged in b from Boxman and tapping in his c my Web mail on my mobile phon iobox.com which enables you to Website. For example, you can re and then go to the WAP site on y back'. The latest news is availabl tones; create graphics to appea

Such is the potential of WAP already launched itself into thi at http://mobile.msn.com/ In developing WAP sites for its cl

"THE BEST EXAMPLE OF E-COMMERCE RIGHT NOW IS STILL PROBABLY AMAZON..." RUSS SELLERS

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Russ. "There's a Finnish site called
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the Web, personalise your options,
nails are there; you can send ringing
isplay screen and more."
ogy that the likes of Microsoft has
ally lucrative area: witness MSN Mobile
antime, Blueberry Net is already

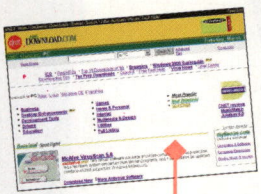
SHOCKWAVE
www.shockwave.com
Launched just last year, this highly impressive and rich showcase of *Shockwave* and *Flash* has already become the number five most travelled site on the Net – and it's easy to see why. It features a mass of games, shows, music and more that will convince any remaining sceptical Web designer of the merits of eye candy plus content.

Russ says: "It's a culmination of *Shockwave* and *Flash* which gives a true interactive experience. It's well-designed and its functionality is good too. A great mix."

AMAZON
www.amazon.co.uk
"The best example of e-commerce right now is still probably Amazon," confesses Russ. While he's happy to admit it's one of the old favourites and hardly the most inspiring in terms of Web design, it's Amazon's superb functionality that gets his vote.

"Once you've signed up as an account member, turned on the one-click option and want to order a video, CD or book, within a single click you've bought it!" says Russ. "The fact is that if you order it one day, it will be there the next day or the day after that. There are people in our office now that will never buy CDs from Our Price or Virgin again – invariably, you will go to that kind of shop in the real world but they won't have the disc you want unless it's the ultimate in mass market."

And we agree with Russ. Amazon.com offers an ideal environment for the online shopper – simplicity and comprehensiveness plus quick delivery times. Talking about when the company launches a new e-commerce site, Russ says: "I always say to the guys: 'Have you tested it?' They say: 'Yeah! Yeah! Of course!' But then I say: 'No. Have you actually ordered something? Had it delivered? That's the only way you can test it'." Indeed, for any e-commerce site to survive in an increasingly competitive field, the final delivery is paramount – take too long and customers will buy elsewhere in the future.



DOWNLOAD.COM
www.download.com
Part of CNET.com, Download is a US site that keeps game fans up to date with the latest software news, events and releases across all formats.

"It's just a very solid site," says Russ. "It has top pics, new sites and daily updates." While he admits that Download is an unusual one to quote from a design point of view, he reckons that sites like Download aren't great design-wise, but "their pure functionality is why I like and use them".

Indeed, Download represents the kind of site that puts its focus squarely on content. There's no attempt at window dressing or eye candy – just plain Web layout that signposts clearly and concisely where to go and what to do. As Russ admits: "Although I come from a design background, design and functionality have to go hand in hand. I do find it very hard to separate the two elements and say that it's a well designed site but otherwise it's shit."

While Download's design can be accused of being bland and unadventurous in these days of Shockwave-intensive sites, it does back-up that old adage that ultimately, content is everything in the eyes of the real-world punter. And content is what Download delivers in droves.

THE GLOBE
www.theglobe.com
While The Globe isn't unique – check out www.familystreet.com – it's a place where punte who know nothing about the Web, coding or HTML can build a Website for free.

"It's very low level stuff and basic, but my children aged ten and nine have built Websites their own through this site," says Russ. "They've uploaded their own pictures, sounds, little vide clips and copied stuff from other sites and put up. I like it because of the immediacy of buildi your own site and putting it up on the Web."

While the end results obviously don't boas cutting edge design, perhaps what it really of a place for our next generation of Web design to be inspired. It's akin to the kid who's given 8mm movie camera for their birthday and th decides after their first five minute 'classic' t they want to make movies when they grow might sound trite but think about it – it did Steven Spielberg any harm, did it?

WAP technology already offers the ability customise and optimise your mobile phone vices. Iobox.com boasts a wide range of vices including the ability to draw your n 'intro' screen on your mobile phone.

2 "A true interactive experience," Shockwave.com is an intelligent and fun experience which appeals to both consumers and professionals alike. Even if the games on offer are not yet at cutting edge standard, it gives you an idea of what Shockwave will be able to achieve in the future.

3 Simplicity and comprehensiveness – Amazon continues to impress industry pundits with its streamlined one-click option and its vast range of goods.

4 Plain Web design and no whistles-and-bells – Download offers both content and functionality.

5 The Globe – a breeding ground generation of Web designers? and basic options, anyone can own sites quickly.

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